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SUBJECT: S/CRS AMBASSADOR HERBST ENGAGES GERMANY AHEAD OF G-8/E.U. PRESIDENCIES

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. In a series of meetings December 6, S/CRS Coordinator Ambassador John Herbst pushed German officials to incorporate stability and reconstruction (S/R) programming into their 2007 G-8 and EU presidencies. His interlocutors from the Federal Chancellery and Foreign Ministry suggested a willingness to move the G-8 S/R agenda beyond steps made during the Russian G-8 presidency, most likely in conjunction with the expected G-8 discussion on Africa. Looking at the S/R issue broadly, Development Ministry officials expressed concern about China's policies undercutting other donors' efforts -- e.g., in Darfur or Zimbabwe. All of Herbst's meetings highlighted that Germany's efforts to formalize inter-agency S/R institutional mechanisms remain in their nascent stages. The discussions also showed a German concern about maintaining strong roles for the UN and, to a certain extent the EU, in S/R. END SUMMARY

FOREIGN MINISTRY: MIXED RESPONSE ON GERMAN G-8 S/R AGENDA

¶2. (SBU) The Secretary's Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), Ambassador John Herbst, met with Foreign Ministry Deputy Political Director Ambassador Ulrich Brandenberg to explore German-U.S. stability and reconstruction (S/R) cooperation during the 2007 German G-8 and European Union Presidencies. Brandenberg expressed continued deference to the European Union on S/R issues and hoped to formalize U.S.-EU collaboration on civilian crisis operations in areas where NATO has not already done so. When pressed to describe additional opportunities, Brandenberg cited Afghanistan, with a particular focus on "Europeanizing" German national efforts on S/R and then synchronizing those of the United States. Brandenberg also referenced continued discussions in the EU about assuming a larger role in Israeli/Palestinian peace process. However, he remained skeptical about broad German involvement globally in S/R issues.

¶3. (SBU) Herbst noted that S/R first appeared on the G-8 agenda during Russia's 2006 presidency and suggested it would be useful to push the agenda one step further in 2007. Brandenburg reiterated Germany's G-8 ambitions to revive African development and stabilization efforts, adding that the G-8, while lacking the operational structure to deliver technical capacity on these issues, still could generate political momentum to push this agenda broadly. Responding to Herbst's proposal of an S/R website for Germany's G-8 presidency or a modest S/R training exchange for G-8 members, Brandenberg demurred and reiterated that Germany's Africa goals represented a step forward for S/R within the G-8 context. He added that Germany is still setting out the broad themes for its chairmanship and remained noncommittal on a U.S. proposal for a G-8 S/R experts meeting.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador Friedrich Daeuble, Commissioner for Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Post-Conflict Peace-Building at the Foreign Ministry, cited adopting German bureaucratic structures to the new S/R operational environment as his major obstacle. Despite lamenting his office's lack of staff and resources, Daeuble anticipated a political push for S/R issues in the Bundestag in the coming months and noted he would push for greater steps on S/R within the G-8 framework during Germany's chairmanship. He also hopes to raise the profile of the new U.S. S/R framework for cooperation with Canada and the United Kingdom within German government.

¶5. (SBU) Referencing the disappointing lack of substance in the October 2006 Moscow G-8 S/R experts meeting, Daeuble wondered whether the G-8 was optimal group to advance the S/R agenda or if the Moscow meeting simply reflected the novelty of using the G-8 forum for S/R issues. Herbst suggested demonstrating a G-8 interest in S/R would move the S/R agenda forward in all G-8 members, including those that have yet to formalize S/R-dedicated institutions, and would ultimately precipitate the needed transformations.

¶6. (SBU) Daeuble thought it would be useful for the G-8 to support African peacekeeping, stabilization, and relief capacities. He was interested in a proposal to engage an African Union-esque election monitoring program or peace consolidation exercise. He thought such a move would be in line with the Rule of Law component to Germany's G-8 Africa agenda. As a forum to advance these proposals, Daeuble suggested that a G-8 S/R experts meeting might follow the June 7-8 Heilengendamm summit and asked the United States for specific language by mid-February 2007 to incorporate into the G-8 agenda.

CHANCELLERY PUSHING FOR GREATER S/R INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

¶7. (SBU) Federal Chancellery Director for United Nations and Global Affairs Edgar Gansen outlined efforts to coordinate the German government's interagency response to S/R. With the Chancellery particularly focused on post-conflict S/R and the "strong feeling" of the government to increase S/R efforts, he sees a need to focus government-wide coordination in the Chancellery itself and acknowledged the bureaucratic challenges facing Daeuble's Foreign Ministry office.

¶8. (SBU) Discussing the need for greater attention to S/R on the G-8 agenda, Gansen was skeptical about commitments for additional money. He also deflected U.S. proposals to train a handful of S/R staff from G-8 states at the State Department or the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF). Still, he proposed greater involvement from China on S/R as a pathway for that country to assume a larger international role.

CHINA, U.N. DOMINATE DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY S/R THEMES

¶9. (SBU) Dr. Doris Witteler-Stiepelmann, Office Director for Peace building, Crisis Prevention, and Foreign and Security Policy at the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, stressed the importance of the United Nations' role in international S/R efforts. She expressed reluctance to move beyond UN instruments in conflict settings. Acknowledging the value the UN's experience adds to S/R work, Herbst pointed out political realities among states in crisis can prevent constructive engagement within formal UN channels -- realities that Europe understood in the Balkans in the 1990's. This instance necessitated alternative mechanisms. He asked Witteler to include S/R on Germany's EU presidency development agenda, particularly in the realm of resource allocation. Witteler said pushing S/R through the EU would require bilateral and multilateral engagement from the U.S. as much as Germany.

¶10. (SBU) Witteler also expressed particular concern about the impact of China's political and economic rise on Germany's development agenda, particularly in Africa, and

elicited U.S. opinions. Citing the November 2006 China-Africa summit in Beijing and ongoing Chinese support for the Sudanese regime amid the Darfur crisis, Witteler expressed unease with China's emergence as an "alternative" donor. She feared Chinese offers of development aid to regimes (e.g., Zimbabwe) whose human rights records or other policies cause concerns to Western donors would weaken the political efforts of Germany and its allies. Her deputy, Bernd Gruschinski, noted that China's aspirations for greater political influence and resource interests governed the Chinese Africa agenda; China therefore had no objections to supporting questionable regimes. In his view, China's behavior undercuts Germany's focus on market-based development mechanisms. (Note: In other fora, the German government has begun questioning its ongoing annual development aid to China following the 2005 closure of certain U.N. development agencies Chinese operations and China's aid donations to Africa. End Note.)

¶11. (SBU) Ambassador Herbst noted China could offer some benefits on S/R issues if engaged properly and cited China's existing role in Afghanistan as an example. Ambassador Herbst also identified the need to work with Japan on issues affecting Asia, particularly on the Korean peninsula, and that developing Japan's S/R capabilities through the G-8 was one option.

¶12. (U) This text has been cleared by S/CRS Ambassador Herbst.
TIMKEN JR